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January 15, 1991

91-6

Four Oklahoma Baptists  
killed in plane crash

By Dave Parker

*N-10 (OKIA)*

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Four Oklahoma Baptists, including two employees of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and one Oklahoma Baptist University professor, were killed Jan. 14 when their small plane crashed just south of Oklahoma City.

Killed in the crash were Paul Magar, BGC0 director of church music and his wife, Judy; Mary June Tabor, BGC0 assistant director of church music; and James D. Woodward, artist-in-residence and former dean of the college of fine arts at OBU. Woodward was also serving as church music consultant for the BGC0.

The four had been in Woodward, a city in northwestern Oklahoma, for a concert with the Singing Church Women, a choral group organized in October 1989. They took off from Woodward after the concert and were on final approach to Will Rogers World Airport when the plane went down northeast of Newcastle, Okla. No cause was immediately determined for the crash.

Magar, 46, had worked with the BGC0 church music department since 1978, serving as an associate until 1989 when he was chosen to lead the department. Born in Kansas, he attended OBU and Central State University. He received his bachelor's degree from Northeastern Oklahoma State University and did graduate work at Oklahoma University.

He served as a full-time minister of music at churches in Fort Smith, Ark.; Midwest City, Okla.; Siloam Springs, Ark.; and Oklahoma City.

Magar led music for revivals in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Kansas, Alaska, the Philippines and Spain. He was both director and associate director of music at Falls Creek state assembly, and wrote a number of published hymns and gospel songs.

He and his wife, Judy, sang at a number of state conferences and retreats. They are survived by one daughter, Melissa Vines, 22.

Tabor, 60, had worked for the convention since 1951. She started in the business manager's office, but moved to church music in 1954. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, she worked with Gene Bartlett until he retired in 1980.

Tabor also was secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference for 20 years. She had no immediate family.

Woodward, 58, was born in Lexington, Ky., and received a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky in 1954. He received a masters in church music from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in 1956.

He was minister of music at churches in Macon, Ga.; Vineville, Okla.; and Tulsa, Okla., before becoming chairman of the church music department at OBU in 1966. In 1973, he was named dean of the college of fine arts at OBU. In 1986 he became artist-in-residence.

In 1962, Woodward also became conductor of the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma, and recorded eight gospel albums with the group. He also directed the Singing Church Women. In addition, he co-organized and was first conductor of the Centurymen, a nationwide choral organization made up of Baptist ministers of music.

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He twice was named "Outstanding Educator of America" and was Southern Seminary's 1973 Alumnus of the Year. He has been listed in Who's Who in Oklahoma and Who's Who Among World Musicians. Survivors include his wife, Betty Shaw; daughter Julia, 32, and son James David Jr., 30.

Arrangements are still pending.

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Annuity Board's fixed fund earnings exceed projected rate for second year

*N-10 (Annuity)* Baptist Press  
1/15/91

DALLAS (BP)--Earnings of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's fixed fund exceeded the projected crediting rate for a second straight year in 1990, according to Senior Vice President John R. Jones, head of the investment division.

"Consequently," Jones said, "we have credited earnings at an effective annual rate of 9.1 percent for 1990." The projected crediting rate for 1990 was 8.9 percent.

"When we announce a rate in advance," Jones said, "we are estimating what we will be able to credit. The estimates are based on the earnings being generated from the existing portfolio of investments. But we also have to consider what we will be able to earn on assets that mature during the year. We reinvest those assets and members' continuing contributions at rates prevailing when the investment is made," Jones explained.

"Because we are non-profit, when we earn over and above the projected crediting rate, we pass on the excess to members who have balances in the fixed fund," he said.

Last month the board announced an 8.8 percent projected earnings rate for the fixed fund in 1991.

The fixed fund, with more than \$1 billion in assets, has primary objectives of preservation of principal and predictable returns. The Annuity Board announces a fixed fund rate each December for the coming year to help members decide how to allocate contributions and accumulations among retirement plan funds.

Though the fixed fund earnings rate is not guaranteed, the investments tend to be of such a conservative nature that the board never has credited less than the projected rate.

The Annuity Board, in conjunction with an investment advisor, invests members' accumulations in guaranteed investment contracts issued by major insurance companies, bank investment contracts and related deposit products issued by commercial banks and high-quality money market investments.

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Richmond seminary elects first permanent president

By Robert H. Dilday

*N-10 (SEBTS)*

Baptist Press  
1/15/91

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--North Carolina pastor Thomas H. Graves has been elected first permanent president of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Trustees of the Southern Baptist Alliance-sponsored seminary announced their election of the 43-year-old pastor of St. John's Baptist Church in Charlotte at a Jan. 14 news conference in Richmond, Va.

They had elected him unanimously during a board meeting Jan. 7 but delayed the announcement until Graves resigned from his church Jan. 13. He is expected to assume his new duties in mid-February.

Graves' election concludes a 7-month presidential search to find a successor to Morris Ashcraft, who was acting president of the seminary from May 1989 to May 1990. Ashcraft is a former dean of the faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

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The Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond was authorized by the Southern Baptist Alliance, an organization of Southern Baptist moderates, at the Alliance's annual meeting in March 1989.

Although the Alliance remains a sponsoring body, it does not own or govern the seminary. The school's 16-member board of trustees is self-perpetuating.

The seminary's mission statement describes it as "unmistakably Baptist" with a commitment to being "racially and gender inclusive with an ecumenical commitment and a global perspective."

Classes are expected to begin in the autumn of 1991 in the facilities of Northminster Baptist Church in Richmond, where the seminary currently is housed. Frank Goare, director for development and admissions, said about 60 students had expressed an interest in attending the school.

In the news conference, Graves said the "preservation of our Baptist heritage demands the formation of new institutions in which our Baptist ideals are honored."

"Baptists have not offered much that is entirely unique to the world religious scene," he said. "The one clear thing we have bequeathed to the Christian tradition is an undying allegiance to religious freedom: a free conscience, in a free church, in a free state."

Graves said the growth of conservative power in the Southern Baptist Convention has diminished this emphasis on freedom. The continuation of "cherished Baptist traditions," he said, "can only be done with the establishment of new institutions which are based, not on narrow creedalism, but on an appreciation for the key Baptist distinctive of Christian freedom."

But he stressed that the seminary was not exclusively a reaction to events in the Southern Baptist Convention.

"What has been born in Richmond is worthy of life regardless of what is going on in Baptist circles," he said. "We have the opportunity here to capture a whole new vision of Christian ministry. Here is a chance to move beyond anything we have experienced before in Baptist theological education."

Graves has been pastor of St. John's Baptist Church since 1987. Earlier pastorates include First Baptist Church, Lake Park, Fla., and Christiansburg (Ky.) Baptist Church.

He also has been associate pastor of Vine Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., and minister of youth at Buechel Park Baptist Church, also in Louisville.

In addition, Graves is a former Baptist campus minister at Yale University, New Haven, Conn., and has taught at Southeastern Seminary; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Bellarmine College, both in Louisville; and Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, Fla.

The Charlottesville, Va., native is a graduate of Vanderbilt University, Nashville; Yale University; and Southern Seminary.

He and his wife, the former Wendy Lou Fowler, have two children.

Graves's father, Allen Graves, is a former dean of the school of religious education at Southern Seminary. His uncle, Harold Graves, is a former president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

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Women find comfort in unity  
despite military separation

By Sarah Zimmerman

N-AMBS

Baptist Press  
1/15/91

ATLANTA (BP)--A grandmother, a newlywed and a woman expecting her third child have found comfort in unity, though their lives are marred by separation.

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They are three of 14 women who meet weekly in the military support ministry of Windsor Forest Baptist Church in Savannah, Ga. Their common denominator is that their husbands are in the Middle East with Operation Desert Shield.

"All we're doing is trying to keep up their morale and praying a lot," says Nita Lambert, group coordinator.

Lambert's summation oversimplifies the group's structure. Seventy-five church members are involved in the ministry, which began in August. Church members provide child care during the 90-minute meetings and transportation to the church. Sunday school classes take turns providing refreshments.

Perhaps the group called upon most often is the basic repairs committee. Lambert said church members have installed home security lights and repaired cars for the military wives.

During one meeting, a plumber brought a new toilet and demonstrated its upkeep. Another church member prepared a booklet of similar suggestions, such as instructions to check the fuse first if the clothes dryer quits working.

The weekly meetings are divided into two 45-minute segments. The first is practical advice on everything from budgets to babies.

The second segment involves counseling and support. "That's when we find out their real problems," Lambert says. Discipline for children, loneliness and uncertainty about the future are inevitable topics of conversation.

In addition, Lambert calls each person involved in the group every week to see if she has any unexpected needs.

Only three of the group's 14 regulars are church members. The meetings are advertised each week through public service radio, television and newspaper announcements. The group is open to "anyone who can hear or read the announcement," Lambert says.

The church works with chaplain Brett Travis at Savannah's Hunter Army Airfield to find people who might benefit from the support group.

Travis, a Southern Baptist, says such support groups "open doors in the community to share Christ." They give the church a chance to "look into the eyes of conflict and say there is hope."

Travis offers the following suggestions for establishing a ministry to families of people stationed in the Middle East:

-- Work with the chaplain at the nearest military base. Ask one church member to attend Sunday morning chapel at the post "in order to keep a pulse on changes that are occurring."

-- "The pastor needs to take a very positive role from the pulpit. He needs to make a statement about what the church represents to the community in a time of crisis," Travis says. "Discuss what the Bible says about conflict and how the church fits into that."

-- Ask church members with military experience to be leaders in the program because of the credibility they will have with other military families.

-- Be creative in approaches to support groups. Try a Saturday morning prayer breakfast or weekly prayer luncheon as a Middle East support group.

-- Be informed about the role of chaplains. Ask a military chaplain to speak during a church service. Prayerfully support their ministry.

Even churches not near a military base can minister to people who have family members in the Middle East. Rather than leading a support group for spouses, such churches could offer support groups to parents or siblings of people stationed in the Middle East.

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"Offer to be their extended family at this time and to meet once a week to pray for their loved one," Travis says.

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Standard carries Sunday school  
commentary in Cambodian language

By Toby Druin

N-00  
JEXAD

Baptist Press  
1/15/91

DALLAS (BP)--The Jan. 2 issue of the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was a milestone in the development of Cambodian Baptist ministry in the United States. The issue carried for the first time a commentary on the Bible Book Series Sunday school lesson in the Cambodian language.

Mailed to 657 Cambodian Baptists in 42 states and 11 foreign countries, the lesson will be used as Sunday school literature in many of the about 90 Cambodian churches in the United States.

The lessons are written by Samuel Nuon, pastor of the Cambodian mission of Derbyshire Church in Richmond, Va. The cost of printing and mailing them -- about \$30 a week -- is paid by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The lesson is carried each week on the back cover of the Baptist Standard. The front cover is the weekly Cambodian edition of the Standard, which is produced for the Cambodian Baptist Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention by the director of the fellowship, Sok T. Doeung.

Doeung has worked with the Standard, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board since 1985 in producing the weekly newsletter. He is a catalytic home missionary, appointed in 1982 to work with Cambodians and Laotians in Texas, but his ministry goes far beyond the borders of the state. He and his family are members of Ryanwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

Sunday school literature has been a goal for the Cambodian congregations for several years, Doeung said, but the relatively small size of the group -- some 5,000 to 7,000 -- made the price of producing Sunday school quarterlies prohibitive.

Using the Standard, however, the persons or churches receiving the weekly paper pay for their subscriptions and the Sunday School Board pays for the extra printing cost for the lesson on the back cover. Doeung credited Peter Kung, manager of the board's language church development/new work section, with helping work out the arrangement.

The mailing list, Doeung said, includes pastors, church leaders, members and others, including some non-Baptists. A third page of the newsletter will be included one week each month.

Doeung pushes circulation of the newsletter, noting the 17 cents weekly cost is less than a postage stamp.

Doeung is "the father of Cambodian work" among Southern Baptists, said Oscar Romo, director of the Home Mission Board's language church extension division.

"Because of his background, the Cambodians have tremendous respect for him," said Romo. "He is a unique leader who is able to bring both Cambodians and Anglos together without mixing them up, allowing both to maintain their identities."

Doeung first came to the United States in the late 1950s to study agriculture at Florida State University. He was a Buddhist, but while a student there, he said, he was witnessed to many times and actually took four Bibles home with him when he returned to Cambodia.

"I tried to read the Bible," he said, "but I was bored because I didn't understand."

In Cambodia he served in the country's department of agriculture, but later became director of a vocational school and then dean of a technological college in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital.

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In 1970, he was sent to the United States as a government representative to appeal for aid for his country. He also spoke on many college campuses, explaining the changes in the Cambodian government.

He was interviewed for a program on the Voice of America, he said, and when he returned to Cambodia found many of his relatives had been burned out of their homes by the Khmer Rouge.

Realizing he was on the Khmer Rouge blacklist, he soon gave up his position and moved to the seacoast. In April 1975 he and his family left on a boat to Thailand where they met Southern Baptist missionary Dan Cobb and went to a refugee camp.

Given a Bible by another missionary, Ron Hill, and Christian literature by Cobb, Doeung began to read. He had little else to do in the camp, he said. The Bible and literature soon had their effect.

"I wondered how I had missed so many years of wonderful knowledge," he said.

Doeung began to serve as an interpreter, and was asked to teach a correspondence Bible course to other refugees in the camp.

"God was using me to teach others about Christ," he said. About 200-250 people, including Doeung, made professions of faith and were baptized by Cobb in a creek.

Doeung came to the United States to Fort Chaffee, Ark., in October 1975 and then to Fort Worth where he, his wife and five children were sponsored by Sagamore Hill Baptist Church.

He had several jobs over the next few years, he said, including exterminator and salesman, before going to work for a company in Mineral Wells, Texas, in 1979 as social director. The company had hired many Cambodians.

Doeung worked there for a year, leading Bible study groups and preaching on the weekends. In 1980 he was approached about becoming a home missionary and ethnic consultant for the Texas convention.

When the Cambodians with the Mineral Wells company began to leave for other parts of the country, Doeung was supported for a year by an Episcopal group before he was asked again to consider a missionary role. At the time he was considering a job with an Arkansas poultry company, which was planning to bring in hundreds of Cambodian employees.

"At first I was impressed to go," he said, but a call from a woman in Carrollton, Texas, a Dallas suburb, who asked him to come and help minister to three Cambodian families turned him away from secular work. He never heard from the poultry company again.

"When you put everything in the hands of the Lord," Doeung said, "he closes the door."

He quickly began working with several Cambodian groups in Dallas, Greenville and Paris, Texas, preaching and organizing in four or five locations every weekend. Rather than wearing him out, he said, the regimen has resulted in the best health of his life. "The more I work, the healthier I get," he said.

The Cambodians have organized into the Cambodian Baptist Fellowship of the SBC and hold an annual meeting sponsored by the Home Mission Board at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., on the July 4 weekend. About 300-400 people will meet there this summer, Doeung said.

"I praise God," for the growth of the work, he said, and he is enthusiastic about the growth of Baptist work in Cambodia, where Southern Baptists now are represented by a couple, the Bruce Carltons. Ten copies of the Cambodian edition of the Baptist Standard now are going to Cambodia.

Doeung said he dreams of going back to his native country some day under sponsorship of Southern Baptists. The dream includes filling a Boeing 747 with other Cambodian Baptists to share the gospel with their countrymen.

"I missed 36 wonderful years of my life as a Buddhist," he said.

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Southern names  
social work prof

Baptist Press  
1/15/91

N-C  
(S/BTS)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)-- Timothy J. Johnson, a faculty member at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pa., has been named associate professor of social work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Johnson, 46, is the first African American to be appointed to a full-time faculty position at Southern Seminary. He begins teaching duties in the fall.

Johnson has taught at Eastern since 1980. He has also been an instructor at the Center for Urban Theological Studies in Philadelphia and an adjunct professor at the Philadelphia College of the Bible. In addition, he worked for six years as a child welfare social worker for Episcopal Community Services in Philadelphia.

He earned the bachelor of science degree from the Philadelphia College of the Bible and the master of social work degree from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He is enrolled in doctoral studies at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Johnson is on the governing boards of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work and the Association of Concerned Christians for Emerging Social Services.

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Nepal Christians openly stage  
first Christmas celebrations

By Michael Chute

F-FMB

Baptist Press  
1/15/91

KATMANDU, Nepal (BP)--For the first time ever, Christians in Nepal openly celebrated Christmas.

Christians in the capital city of Katmandu staged open-air meetings, organized public carol singing and pasted Christmas greetings on walls.

Observers said a large crowd gathered in Katmandu for an evangelistic rally in mid-December sponsored by the Nepal Bible Society. Nepali church leaders preached and sold thousands of Christian books and New Testaments.

"We need to take our opportunity now to show that we as Christians are part of Nepalese society," said Nepal Bible Society Director Loknath Manaen. "If we're silent now, we may not be recognized after the election" in April to select a new legislature to govern the country.

On Christmas Eve the Nepal Christian Fellowship organized a program in Katmandu's largest auditorium. Nepali Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai sent Christmas greetings to the gathering. Christians at the meeting petitioned the government to recognize Christmas Day as a national holiday.

"I hope when people see that Christians are respected by the leaders of the country that the general attitude towards us will slowly change," said Tirtha Thapa, Nepal Christian Fellowship general secretary. He recalled the persecution the Christian minority has faced in recent years.

Until mass demonstrations toppled King Birendra's absolute monarchy last April, Christians were persecuted for their faith in Nepal, the world's only Hindu state. Previously, Christians convicted of proselyting received six-year prison terms; religious conversion brought a one-year sentence.

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Church leaders acknowledged during the Christmas celebrations that such Christian activities would have been impossible just a year ago under the previous government. Since pro-democracy demonstrations ended a ban on political parties and established a multiparty system, Bhattarai's interim government has been tolerant toward all segments of society.

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First long-term Baptist  
workers arrive in Mongolia

By Michael Chute

NFMBS

Baptist Press  
1/15/91

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia (BP)--Southern Baptists' first long-term workers in Mongolia arrived Jan. 13 in the capital city of Ulan Bator to begin full-time teaching assignments at the medical college there.

Stan and Laura Kirk of Memphis, Tenn., are under contract with Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid organization. Over the past two years CSI has placed some English-teaching teams in Mongolia for one- and two-week stints. The Kirks are the first Southern Baptists assigned to Mongolia on a long-term basis.

Mongolia, a nation of about 2 million people, is surrounded by China and the Soviet Union. It is closely allied with the Soviets but established diplomatic relations with the United States in early 1987.

"The Kirks' CSI contract is for two years but they're interested in staying longer," said Jack Shelby, CSI's Hong Kong-based administrator. "Their teaching contract with the Mongolian government is for one year since such contracts are normally given on a year-by-year basis. But we have every confidence and hope that this will turn into a much longer arrangement."

The Kirks, members of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, have prepared to work in Mongolia for three years. They will teach English at the medical college. Kirk, a pharmacist, also may teach some pharmacy courses in English.

"Ours is a long-term commitment in Mongolia," Kirk said. "That means doing our jobs well enough to be invited to stay longer than two years. If we go with the attitude of helping them as people every way we can as much as we can, it won't take them long to pick up on that. People pick up on an attitude even if they don't understand the language."

But The Kirks' first priority is to "survive," he said in Hong Kong en route to Mongolia. "After that we should learn the language (Khalkha) and do more heart-to-heart ministry. We also hope to get other Southern Baptists into Mongolia. There are needs in agriculture, business, education, medicine. All are possibilities for Southern Baptists to come and live in Mongolia."

Kirk most recently taught English to Russian immigrants in Memphis. He recently completed two years of Russian language study. He also worked at LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis, teaching developmental English to students who speak English as a second language. Earlier, he held several positions in the medical-pharmaceutical field working for the University of Tennessee Hospital and for Walgreens Corporation.

A native of Selmer, Tenn., Kirk received a master's degree in teaching English as a foreign language from Memphis State University, and a pharmacy degree from the College of Pharmacy at the University of Tennessee Center for Health Science in Memphis.

Mrs. Kirk, the former Laura Polk of Union City, Tenn., worked in sales with the Nabisco Corporation and as a home interior designer in Memphis. She received a bachelor's degree in home economics and interior design from the University of Tennessee-Martin. The Kirks have a 1-year-old daughter, Merry.

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At 101, Mable Adams  
still serving Jesus

By Ken Camp

*F-2000*

DALLAS (BP)--A Dec. 30 celebration at First Baptist Church, Glen Rose, Texas, marked Mable Adams' 101st birthday and three decades of continuing service to the church.

Adams received national recognition at age 97 when she became the oldest person in the country to complete MasterLife, led a 13-year-old girl to faith in Jesus while in Evangelism Explosion training, and spoke the following year at the 1988 Texas Baptist Evangelism Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

Since then, she also has received training in the Roman Road soul-winning method and has continued her studies in discipleship training. To date, she has completed 175 hours in study courses, according to her daughter, Mary Adams.

"She is a tremendous lady," said her pastor, Phillip Graves. "She is always here when the doors are open. She is faithful to attend all our services, even on bad weather days."

Adams served 15 years as teacher of the Dorcas Sunday school class at First Baptist Church, Glen Rose. She still is an active member of the class, since renamed the Prayer Class, and she attends all its scheduled activities.

Adams maintains that church attendance and involvement in Southern Baptist activities were instilled in her quite early by her father, James Henry Wayland, who gave the land for what is now Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas.

"Father never asked us if we wanted to go to Sunday school. It was assumed. When the church bell rang, Dr. Wayland and his nine children were there," she said.

She still vividly recalls her conversion experience at age nine following the preaching of an itinerant evangelist who visited Plainview. She considers both eternal life and her 101 years of physical activity grace gifts from God.

"Our time on earth is in God's hands. I had nothing to do with it. There's no doubt it's a blessing from him," she said.

"I enjoy life, and I thank God every day that he has given me the gift of aging. Peace comes with old age."

Perhaps the most precious aspect of life at her age is the closeness she feels to her Heavenly Father, Adams notes.

"There is a beauty about old age. God is with me, and I talk to him every day. Each morning, I sit at my window and talk with him, often two hours at a time. I don't even call it praying. We just talk."

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Furloughing missionaries get  
cars from Houston minister

By Toby Druin

*N-10  
Texas*

Baptist Press  
1/15/91

HOUSTON (BP)--Harvey Kneisel looks like the kind of man from whom you would buy a used car.

The catch is that though Kneisel is in the used car business, he isn't selling them. He gives them away -- to Southern Baptist missionaries on furlough.

Kneisel is minister of missions at First Baptist Church of Houston, where he oversees the work of five mission centers and 23 missions.

But he also heads the work of the Macedonian Call Foundation, which he founded a decade ago to provide transportation for Southern Baptist missionaries on furlough.

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Kneisel and his wife were missionaries to Guyana from 1963-67 and to India and the Philippines, 1982-86, and he knew first-hand the difficulties a missionary faces in trying to secure dependable transportation at low cost while home on furlough. Often it meant having to buy a used car and then losing the investment when they went back to the mission field.

"Missionaries are on reduced income, anyway, when they are on furlough," Kneisel said, "and while in the States they are trying to outfit themselves for the next three or four years on their field. They can't afford to lose what they put into a car."

So Kneisel established the Macedonian Call Foundation, a non-profit organization, that could receive used but still usable automobiles from concerned Baptists -- or anyone else -- and provide them for missionaries.

The person providing the automobile is given credit for the gift, according to the book value of the car, and can charge it off as a contribution.

The first car, a 1969 Buick, was given by a Conroe, Texas, layman, who also gave \$10,000 to get the organization started, Kneisel said. A family of doctors in Arkansas has given the foundation five cars, including a 1987 BMW with only 11,000 miles on it, but Kneisel noted some missionaries are a "little uncomfortable" driving a new BMW.

One, however, was glad to get a Lincoln Town Car. The missionary had five children.

The foundation also has been given a 1965 Cadillac limousine. When it came, Kneisel said, he wondered how they could use it, "But the Lord doesn't have accidents, only incidents," he noted, and it has been used to bring people to church and three days a week is used to bring bread for the needy.

The "fleet" has included hundreds of cars over the years and now has about 25 in active use. Many more are needed, Kneisel said.

"We have more and more requests every month," he said. "Last June and July we had 21 missionaries who wanted cars, but we were unable to fill all the requests."

Kneisel stays in touch with the Foreign Mission Board regarding furlough schedules and sends a newsletter regarding the automobiles to every SBC mission field. Many missionaries are coming home more often on shorter furloughs, he noted, and the need for more cars is growing.

"I feel there are enough Southern Baptists to provide enough cars for all missionaries on furlough, if they just knew the need and how much it means to them," he said.

Kneisel asks only that a car be usable, that it be "good transportation" or "drives good." Many cars come to him with more than 150,000 miles, he noted, but many thousands more will be added to most before they are sold.

The only responsibility a missionary has is to pick up the car in Houston, keep it insured, repair it as is needed while it is in use and return it to Houston when the furlough is over.

People with automobiles they would like to give to the foundation can telephone Kneisel at (713) 957-5860 or write to him at First Baptist Church, 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024-2199.